

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4530

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0385

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, SF, RH

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS

WITH RHODESIANS ON SETTLEMENT IMPASSE

REF: CAPE TOWN 384

1. SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DR. HILGARD MULLER, AND FOREIGN SECRETARY, BRAND FOURIE, FLEW TO SALISBURY YESTERDAY MORNING FOR TALKS WITH RHODESIAN OFFICIALS. THEY RETURNED LAST NIGHT. THEIR TRIP RESULTED FROM DECISION OF RHODESIAN COURT OF INQUIRY TO KEEP ZANU'S LEADER, REVEREND NDABANINGI SITHOLE, IN DETENTION (REFTEL).

2. LAST NIGHT, FOURIE COMMENTED TO AMBASSADOR THAT MEETING WITH RHODESIANS WAS "FRUSTRATING, AS USUAL." HE SAID HE AND DR. MULLER ASKED RHODESIANS WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO DO TO
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GET SETTLEMENT TALKS UNDERWAY AGAIN. RHODESIAN RESPONSE

WAS THAT NEXT MOVE WAS UP TO AFRICANS. THEY ASSERTED THAT, IN DETAINING SITHOLE AND OTHER ZANU FIGURES, THEY HAD DONE NOTHING THAT ZAMBIANS HAD NOT DONE. IMPLICATION WAS THAT THEY AND ZAMBIANS WERE WORKING TOWARDS SAME END AND HOW COULD RHODESIANS BE BLAMED BY ANYONE FOR WHAT THEY HAD DONE. RHODESIANS ALSO SAID THAT IT NOW UP TO ANC'S BISHOP MUZOREWA, NOT THEM, TO RE-INITIATE TALKS.

3. RHODESIANS AGVE MULLER AND FOURIE COPY OF LENGTHY COURT DECISION AND SEEMED TO BELIEVE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD ACCEPT IT AS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF SITHOLE'S GUILT AND JUSTIFICATION FOR HIS DETENTION. SOUTH AFRICANS WHOLLY UNIMPRESSED BY THIS LINE. FOURIE TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT MULLER AND HE TOLD RHODESIANS THAT COURT DECISION WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED BY ANYBODY. RHODESIANS HAD NOT PROVED SITHOLE'S COMPLI-CITY IN ASSASSINATION PLOT AND HAD MERELY BROUGHT OUT WHAT WAS ALREADY KNOWN--THAT ZANNU HAD NOT BEEN LIVING UP TO TERMS OF CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. OBVIOUSLY, SITHOLE, AS LEADER OF THE ORGANIZATION, BORE INDIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ZANU'S ACTIONS, BUT NOT TO AN EXTENT THAT RHODESIANS WERE JUSTIFIED IN JAILING HIM.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY AMBASSADOR, FOURIE SAID SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE NOTHING IN MIND TO DO FURTHER UNTIL AFTER OAU CM MEETING IN DAR NEXT WEEK.

5. COMMENT: SOUTH AFRICANS CLEARLY BECOMING INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED BY THEIR DEALINGS WITH SMITH GOVERNMENT. WHILE THEY PROBABLY HAVE NOT YET REACHED A POINT OF ANGER THAT WOULD LEAD THEM TO APPLY GREATER PRESSURES (IN EFFECT, ECONOMIC SANCTIONS) ON RHODESIANS, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE, PERHAPS EVEN ACCELERATE, REMOVAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE FROM RHODEISA. HOWEVER, WARY OF ALIENATING WHITE OPINION AT HOME AND FEARFUL OF CONSEQUENCES OF ANY ACTION THEY MIGHT TAKE WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TO DECISION BY AFRICANS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE THEIR CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO RHODESIAN PROBLEM. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT, IF ANY-THING, THEH CAN DO TO OVERCOME DILEMMA POSED BY RHODESIANS DUPLICITOUS (OR CLUMSY) HANDLING OF SITHOLE AFFAIR.

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